

Screening Criteria

Transportation enhancement activities applications are screened before they are scored. They must meet the screening criteria described below.

All of the following screening requirements must be met, where applicable. If a proposal meets all of the applicable criteria within these requirements, it is eligible for ranking; if not, it will be dropped at this point. The screening requirements fall into seven groups:

1. Transportation Enhancement
2. Consistency
3. Financial
4. Project-Specific
5. Air Quality
6. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and
7. Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation *and* Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties.

1. *Transportation Enhancement Requirements*

- What is the direct relationship to the surface transportation system"
- Is this over and above a normal project?"
- "Which category or categories encompass the transportation enhancement activities?"

Transportation enhancement activities are public funds. They are to be used for facilities that are in public ownership for public use. Improvements to private property and commercial facilities are not eligible. Example: Cafe seating, childcare center and offices will in most cases be considered improvements for non-public benefit, and will not be eligible.

Enhancements development must be for capital improvement; it cannot be a maintenance expenditure, project with a life of less than 5 years, or a one-time temporary improvement.

2. *Consistency Requirements*

- a. The proposed activities must be consistent or "not inconsistent" with the regional transportation plan. Projects must be consistent with the policy direction of this plan if the plan does not go into a level of detail that specifically lists the activities. Applicants are encouraged to contact their Regional Transportation Planning Agency to review a copy of their regional transportation plan.

- b. Proposed activities are to be either included in, or consistent with, an applicable adopted state, regional, or local plan. Activities must be consistent with the policy direction of the relevant local plan, if the plan does not go into a level of detail that specifically lists them. If possible, refer to relevant sections of the local plans in support of the proposed activity.
- c. All proposed activities must be consistent with local land use plans. Proof of consistency, where the local land use plans do not provide a sufficient level of detail, is acceptable.

3. *Financial Requirements*

- a. The administering agency must have the ability to meet financial processing requirements within a realistic time frame for project completion, level of funding, and experience of project personnel. Normally, an agency with an existing master agreement can meet this requirement. (See Section D.)
- b. The proposed project must have reasonable cost estimates and be supported by an adequate financial plan. Adequate financial plans include the identification of all sources of funding to build the project; a logical cash flow, given that these are reimbursable funds; and sensible project phasing. All facilities that require an ongoing operating budget to be useful must demonstrate that such financial capability exists as part of this requirement. (See page D-14, Over-Expenditures and Under-Expenditures.) The proposed project must request a minimum of \$100,000 in federal funds. Projects below this amount may be "bundled" by the Regional Transportation Planning Agency. Projects of unusual merit requesting federal funds of \$50,000 to \$100,000 may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Agencies that are unfamiliar with the costs of constructing to the design standards required for federal-aid projects are encouraged to read the Project Administration/Implementation (Section D) of these guidelines and consult with their Caltrans District Local Assistance Engineer.

- c. As required by the Federal Highway Administration and Caltrans, all local contributions to the activity must be affirmed by a formal action of a policy board with the authority to commit funds. Such a formal action must have occurred prior to the inclusion of a project in the adopted State Transportation Improvement Program. State agencies must submit a letter from the individual with the administering authority to commit funds instead. A financial officer typically fulfills this role.

- d. The applicant agency must have a commitment to provide the local funding share (match) from non-federal public sources.
- e. Project applicant must demonstrate the ability and commitment to maintain the resultant improvement. (Title 23, U.S. Code) Application should indicate source of maintenance funds. For projects on State highway right of way, applicant must have Caltrans' signatures on application.

4. *Project-Specific Requirements*

- a. The proposed activities must have the required number of completed, signed application forms, including all attachments, and should be submitted in accordance with established deadlines. Incomplete applications may be removed from consideration without prejudice.
- b. The proposed activities must be well-defined. They must have clear project limits, intended scope of work, and project concept. If the applicant agency does not have a master agreement with Caltrans, the application must show that project costs include contracting out administration of the project to another agency. The agency must also show that costs for federal environmental documentation have been considered (risk assessment).
- c. The proposed activities must be well-justified. Wherever possible, this justification should include the results of quantitative analysis. Adequate information must be submitted so that evaluation can be made of what the activities will accomplish.
- d. Where applicable, the proposed project must have appropriate phasing and must result in usable segments, functional facilities, or protection of resources, such as vital right-of-way.
- e. For the 1996 STIP, project should begin in the federal fiscal year for which it is funded.
- f. The nomination must demonstrate a reasonable schedule for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) clearances. (Environmental clearance must be complete by the time the Commission votes for allocation of capital funds. See Flowchart, page D-10.)

See Eligible Costs, Section B, for a brief list of elements that may extend the timeline for environmental clearance, such as parklands, endangered species, wetlands, historic or cultural resources, railroad sites, right of way acquisition, or public controversy.

- g. The applicant is a public agency having or capable of obtaining a master agreement and supplemental agreement with Caltrans (page D-1). It is the agency that will take responsibility to administer and maintain the project.
- h. The proposed activity (development) is done on *publicly-owned facilities*, or on other facilities with the appropriate legal assurance of *public access* for the intended use, protection of the public investment, and maintenance for the life of the project.

For any facility funded under this program, the “spirit” of the use of the funds for public benefit should be that the project maximize the use of the facility by the public. If a private vendor is to occupy a facility – regardless of whether the particular portion of the facility being occupied was the subject of enhancement-funded work or not – the type of operation being conducted by the vendor should be directed toward the greatest number of people, AND toward the people who will otherwise be benefiting from the transportation enhancement-related activities that regularly will take place at the facility.

5. Air Quality Requirements

Usually, transportation enhancement activities will not create air quality problems.

- a. Proposed activities located in air quality non-attainment areas and which will result in air quality impacts must be consistent with the regional project review requirements, that is, there can be no significant unmitigated negative impacts to the region’s air quality shown and, if possible, adequate transportation control measures must be included.
- b. In Transportation Management Areas (generally, urbanized areas) Federal funds may not be programmed for any highway project that will result in a significant increase in carrying capacity for single occupant vehicles unless the project is part of an approved congestion management system. (In the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) region, all projects, if programmed, will be required to comply with MTC Resolution No. 2270.)

6. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Requirements

All proposed projects must meet applicable ADA requirements, including those incorporated into the California Building Code.

7. *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation*

Proposed historic preservation projects must meet applicable Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation, and State Historical Building Code, or Executive Order W-26-92. Transportation enhancement activities must be managed under the direction of professionals meeting the standards published in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36, CFR, Part 61.

Lists of most eligible and listed historic resources are available from Caltrans Districts. Archaeology information must be obtained from the Archaeology Information Centers. Their current fees are \$90 per hour or any portion thereof. A typical search takes one to three hours. (See Archaeology Information Centers in the Appendix.)